

If so, there are a number of controversial UN treaties that have not been ratified because they also could potentially nullify rights granted to us under the Constitution. Treaties such as the UN Covenant on the Rights of the Child, which officially designates the state as the guardian of children's best interest, insuring that the state knows better than parents what materials are appropriate and what associations are beneficial. It is also responsible for protecting the child when parental beliefs conflict with the rights of the child. Politically incorrect beliefs such as spanking or religious indoctrination could be grounds for placing children into foster care.

Another controversial treaty is the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. This treaty has been criticized in part because it forces countries which sign it to allow abortion rights to women, whether or not there is national legislation prohibiting abortion.

It doesn't take much imagination to project what agencies like the Department of Education or the Department of Health and Human Services could do with directives such as these.

The agency Clinton has set up with the issue of this Executive Order has been directed to monitor agencies, coordinate responses to human rights complaints, review proposed legislation for violations, and monitor the actions of states, commonwealths, and territories of the United States, as well as Native American tribes. It would appear that no local governments will escape the scrutiny of this new political bureaucracy.

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION SERVICES PROVIDER REGISTRATION ACT

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I have reintroduced legislation to provide a resource to people seeking reputable agencies and facilitators that process intercountry adoptions. The bill, entitled the "Intercountry Adoption Services Provider Registration Act," requires people licensed to process intercountry adoptions or involved with intercountry adoptions to register with the U.S. State Department's Office of Children's Issues. The agencies are required to disclose all addresses, employees and sources. If any agency fails to comply, it may suffer financial penalties or a loss of its operating license.

When I became a member of this body, I vowed to give a voice to those with no voice and to protect people from being victimized. Accordingly, when a constituent from my 17th district told me about her horrible experience with an intercountry adoption, I was compelled to take action.

My constituent and her husband had tried for many years to have a second child. When circumstances beyond their control would not let them have another child, they decided to adopt a foreign-born child. They researched the international adoption process and adoption agencies. They contacted the State Department and national adoption networks to gather information before proceeding with their

adoption. Finally, they settled on what they thought to be a reputable agency from New Mexico. The adoption process was underway. The New Mexico intercountry adoption facilitator asked for and received prepayment, followed by several installments to cover costs. The couple understood that an intercountry adoption was an expensive process, but knew that the cost would not matter when they had a child in their arms.

After a few months, a photograph of a three-year-old Russian girl was sent to the couple. They were told she was eligible for adoption. In order to prevent the child from being adopted by someone else, the couple was told to send additional monies to secure the adoption. The facilitator explained that the final adoption would take six to eight months to process. The couple gladly sent the money. What they weren't told was that Russia had placed a moratorium on all foreign adoptions. The moratorium took effect even before they were sent the photo of the child. The child was never placed in their home and they lost more than \$12,000 to a foreign adoption con artist. When the adoption facilitator was confronted with the moratorium information, he changed the name of his organization and moved to another state. After several months of searching for the agency, the couple is suing for a refund. The case is pending in a New Mexico court.

While completing research for this bill, I discovered many other couples who have similar horror stories of intercountry adoptions. Fraud, deceit and lots of money were involved in each of the tales. The House of Representatives must provide some consumer protection for persons who wish to adopt a foreign-child.

The Hague Intercountry Adoption Convention, a convention convened to protect children and co-operation in respect to intercountry adoptions, has yet to be signed by the United States. Among other matters, this treaty addresses the fraudulent and unscrupulous practices of a minority of agencies that participate in selling children, bribing parents and government officials, deceiving adoptive parents and failing to ensure that each and every adoption is in the best interests of the children concerned. However, the Hague Convention gives no specific legal protection to any person or provide a resource regarding the adoption process. Each individual country must protect its citizens. The Intercountry Adoption Services Provider Registration Act will provide a much needed source of information and protection for prospective adoptive parents.

THE REINTRODUCTION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ABOLISH THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

HON. RAY LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to reintroduce, along with Congressman WISE from West Virginia, a constitutional amendment that seeks to end the arcane and obsolete institution known as the Electoral College.

It is no accident that this bill is being introduced today, the day that the electoral ballots are opened and counted in the presence of the House and Senate. I hope that the timing of this bill's introduction will only underscore the fact that the time has come to put an end to this archaic practice that we must endure every four years.

Only the President and the Vice President of the United States are currently elected indirectly by the Electoral College—and not by the voting citizens of this country. All other elected officials, from the local officeholder up to United States Senator, are elected directly by the people.

Our bill will replace the complicated electoral college system with the simple method of using the popular vote to decide the winner of a presidential election. By switching to a direct voting system, we can avoid the result of electing a President who failed to win the popular vote. This outcome has, in fact, occurred three times in our history and resulted in the elections of John Quincy Adams (1824), Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), and Benjamin Harrison (1888).

In addition to the problem of electing a President who failed to receive the popular vote, the Electoral College system also allows for the peculiar possibility of having Congress decide the outcome should a presidential ticket fail to receive a majority of the Electoral College votes. Should this happen, the 12th Amendment requires the House of Representatives to elect a President and the Senate to elect a Vice President. Such an occurrence would clearly not be in the best interest of the people, for they would be denied the ability to directly elect those who serve in our highest offices.

This bill will put to rest the Electoral College and its potential for creating contrary and singular election results. And, it is introduced not without historical precedent. In 1969, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a bill calling for the abolition of the Electoral College and putting a system of direct election in its place. Despite passing the House by a vote of 338-70, the bill got bogged down in the Senate where a filibuster blocked its progress.

So, it is in the spirit of this previous action that we introduce legislation to end the Electoral College. I am hopeful that our fellow members on both sides of the aisle will stand with us by cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

IN MEMORY OF PADDY CLANCY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a music legend, Paddy Clancy of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. The Clancy Brothers were one of the first Irish musical groups to achieve international notoriety. The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem created numerous hit songs in the 1960's.

Paddy Clancy was born in Carrick-on-Suir in Tipperary county to a family of nine, all of